



April 13, 2013

Executive Committee
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

EX 30.1 New Casino and Convention Development in Toronto

Dear Mayor Rob Ford and Councillors:

The *Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations* (FoNTRA) is opposed to a proposed casino in the City of Toronto. Our most compelling reason is from an economic perspective. The other two reasons relate to urban planning and public health.

Those in favour of a casino claim two economic reasons: first, a casino could provide funds for the depleted treasuries of Ontario and Toronto, and second, a casino could create jobs. Until the city and provincial governments determine the expected revenue from a casino for the Ontario and Toronto treasuries and share that with the public, we do not have sufficient information to make a determination. The logic of a foreign owned casino suggests, however, negative rather than positive economic consequences.

Casino dollars are consumption spending: money spent there is money not available to be spent elsewhere in our urban economy. A casino, therefore, just shunts money and jobs from one place to another. Spending on casinos is money that could be spent on other gambling opportunities, other entertainment or other shopping activities. It is highly unlikely that a casino would attract cross border tourists. The catastrophe is that most of the money and jobs will not be realized in Toronto, but in Nevada or California, because the majority of the tax revenue from a casino in Toronto will return to the state where the owners reside. Our understanding is that only a fraction of the revenue will stay with governments in Ontario, and only a fraction will stay in the pockets of the casino's workforce. In light of these economic situations, it appears that a definitive study of the economic benefit of a casino in Toronto is warranted.

In FoNTRA's opinion, casinos do not contribute positively to city-building and their social impact affects the quality of place. By their nature, casinos are inward-facing, aiming to keep the client contently in one place, depleting the life of the street, and giving little or nothing back to the public realm. Typically, casinos present a windowless façade for stretches of a block or more. If located on the exhibition grounds, a casino would jeopardize the iconic Canadian National Exhibition. In addition, given that the locations being suggested, such as the exhibition grounds, are car rather than transit oriented, a casino would gener-

ate a large volume of cars, with all the associated congestion. If the proposed casino is located in downtown Toronto, it will further clog the city with cars and also require parking spaces.

Finally, most gamblers may be able to control their impulses. For them, the expenditure is akin to outlay for any entertainment, and therefore harmless. But a minority of gamblers fall prey to addiction which has been proven to inflict serious damage to businesses, family life and finances. As such, casinos are a threat to public health.

For the above reasons, FoNTRA strongly opposes a casino for Toronto.

Yours truly,

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The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA) is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of 27 member organizations. Its members, all residents' associations, include at least 170,000 Toronto residents within their boundaries. The 27 residents' associations that make up FoNTRA believe that Ontario and Toronto can and should achieve better development. Its central issue is not *whether* Toronto will grow, but *how*. FoNTRA believes that sustainable urban regions are characterized by environmental balance, fiscal viability, infrastructure investment and social renewal.